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REMARKS

Claims 1, 6, 12, 17, 23 and 28 have been amended. Claims 1 – 33 are pending in this Application. Reconsideration and further examination is respectfully requested.

Allowable Claims

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowability of claims 11, 22, and 33.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 112

Claims 6 – 10, 17 – 21, and 28 – 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Antecedent basis problems have been corrected in claims 6, 17, and 28 to obviate this rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

Claims 1 – 4, 12 – 15, and 23 – 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Perreault et al. (US No. 5,793,307) (hereinafter “Perreault”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Applicants’ exemplary claim 1 currently recites in part “a master device for polling a plurality of slave devices and maintaining a fast polling list and a slow polling list, the master device polling only one slave device at a time from either list”.

Perreault discloses a method of controlling bus or network contention between devices. A contention controller in Perreault accesses three different databases – an active database, an idle

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database, and an unresponsive database. Secondary stations in the active database are accessed one by one. But secondary stations in the idle and unresponsive databases are accessed in groups by a single poll. (Perreault Col. 13 lines 36 – 49). Perreault fails to teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed apparatus including a master device for polling a plurality of slave devices and maintaining a fast polling list and a slow polling list, the master device polling only one slave device at a time from either list. The Applicants therefore respectfully assert that claims 1 – 4, 12 – 15, and 23 – 26 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 5, 16, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al. (US No. 6,070,205) (hereinafter “Kato”) in view of Cranston et al. (US No. 6,253,269) (hereinafter “Cranston”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Applicants' exemplary claim 5 sets forth an apparatus wherein the master device periodically switches between the plurality of serial buses to communicate with the slave devices.

Kato teaches arbitration between devices for bus mastership. The Office action suggests that Cranston discloses a method wherein “the master device periodically switches between the plurality of serial buses to communicate with the slave devices”. The Applicants assert that this is incorrect. In Cranston, two master devices (management cards) have access to their own buses (Cranston Col. 4 lines 27 – 30). Slave devices (application cards) arbitrate between the two

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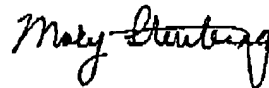
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buses to decide which master device to respond to (Cranston Col. 4 lines 44 - 47). Thus, Cranston does not in fact teach a master device that periodically switches between a plurality of serial buses. Therefore, the combination of Kato and Cranston is insufficient to teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed method wherein "the master device periodically switches between the plurality of serial buses to communicate with the slave devices". The Applicants therefore respectfully assert that claims 5, 16, and 27 are in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, review of this application is respectfully requested. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Applicants' Attorney at 978-264-6664 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendments, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

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